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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: GREAT RUSSIA PARTY: SURVIVAL UNLIKELY

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4(b/d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Great Russia (GR) party, launched with some fanfare on May 5 by Duma Deputies Aleksey Savelyev and Dmitriy Rogozin, may not be on the December Duma ballot. While interlocutors concur that GR's nationalistic message should make it relatively easy to find the requisite number of members (50,000) to qualify as a party, they are doubtful that the Kremlin is in the mood for potentially uncontrollable political developments prior to the December parliamentary elections. End summary.

Although "Russia for Russians" is an attractive slogan...

¶2. (U) The newly-created Great Russia party, which held its inaugural congress on May 5, is designed to fit into Russia's ever-expanding national-patriotic part of the political spectrum. Its creators include Andrey Savelyev (deputy from the Kremlin's second party, A Just Russia), Dmitriy Rogozin (also A Just Russia deputy, as well as leader of the nationalistic Congress of Russian Communities), and Aleksandr Belov (leader of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration). The more controversial Rogozin and Belov are not listed as formal Great Russia leaders, however. Savelyev expressed confidence at the press conference unveiling the party that Great Russia would be registered, since the party's documentation had mimicked that of A Just Russia, which had been registered without difficulty. He also asserted to the press that they expected GR to win 25 percent of the vote in the December Duma elections.

¶3. (C) Ulyanovsk's United Civil Front/Yabloko representative Aleksandr Bragin joined other Embassy contacts in believing that, regrettably, the "fascist" messages of Rogozin and Belov could attract enough supporters to allow GR to be registered as a party.

...Great Russia does not enjoy Kremlin support

¶4. (C) Most contacts, however, believe that Great Russia will be stymied in its registration quest. Ekho Moskvyy Editor Aleksey Venediktov rated Great Russia's chance of being registered low because it lacked Kremlin support. Indem's Yuriy Korgunuk agreed, noting that should the Kremlin feel the need to get the nationalistic element of the electorate to the polls, it would be simpler to re-calibrate United Russia's message.

¶5. (C) Duma deputy Aleksey Mitrofanov summarily dismissed Great Russia as a potential political force, since his LDPR was Russia's "patriotic" party. Other Russia's Irina Khakamada told us that it was questionable whether the Kremlin would even allow the party the opportunity to conduct

fundraising, since the appeal of its nationalistic rhetoric unnerved the GOR leadership.

¶6. (SBU) Subsequent developments have no doubt been discouraging for GR. Savelyev was questioned on May 7 by the Moscow procurator, at LDPR's request, about rumors that his party was being financed by political exile Boris Berezhovskiy. Acting Federal Registration Service head of political party registration Galina Fokina announced publicly that she doubted that Great Russia would be able to complete all requirements by the end of August, in time to allow it to compete in the December Duma elections.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) Any prospective party with Kremlin support could easily be registered in time for the Duma elections, but Great Russia and Rogozin are not Kremlin favorites. Beginning with the December 2005 Moscow election, Rogozin's Rodina party was neutralized when Rogozin's ambition and the popularity of the party's nationalistic message caused it to slip out of the Kremlin's control. The Kremlin appears to be in no mood for similar spontaneity in this election cycle. It is possible that with Great Russia Savelyev and Rogozin wanted only to demonstrate their own appeal in order to ensure that they will be considered as A Just Russia shapes its party lists.
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